

TeacherPrep
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PROGRAM IN TEACHER PREPARATION

Administrators as Scholars



Seminar
2009-2010

Oppositional Culture and the Racial Achievement Gap

November 16, 2009

Angel L. Harris, Ph.D.

Department of Sociology and Center for African American Studies, Princeton University

9 am-12 noon and lunch will be served following the seminar

By age 17 the average black and Latino/a student is four years behind the average white student; black and Latino/a 12th graders score lower than white 8th graders in reading, math, United States (U.S.) history and geography. This racial achievement gap should be considered a national crisis and among the biggest social problems facing the U.S. during this century. With the advent of the school voucher movement and the push to end affirmative-action programs over the past decade, the issue of race-based and ethnicity-based test score gaps has garnered increased attention from policy makers and the general public. Specifically, there is increasing interest in identifying the factors that contribute to the gap.

A theory that has garnered much attention within the social sciences is the oppositional culture explanation, which posits that blacks and Hispanics develop attitudes that are oppositional to schooling. This idea has received widespread attention among both academics and teachers. While many academics believe the basic tenets of this theory have been discredited, the perspective lives on, perhaps nowhere more actively than among our nation's teachers. Furthermore, strong support still exists in some quarters of the academy. This seminar will focus on the scientific research of the oppositional culture theory. I will present research on various permutations of the theory.

Angel Harris is an Assistant Professor of sociology and African American Studies. He is also a research associate in the Office of Population Research, Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, and the Joint Doctoral Degree Program in Social Policy and Sociology at Princeton University. His research interests include social inequality, policy, and education. His work focuses on the social psychological determinants of the racial achievement gap. Specifically, he examines the factors that contribute to differences in academic investment among African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans, and Whites. He has published several articles on the racial achievement gap and currently has a completed book manuscript on this subject under review. He is also in the process of completing a second book manuscript on the link between parenting and youths' schooling outcomes. Dr. Harris joined the faculty at Princeton in 2007 after spending a year as an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Harris earned a B.A. in psychology from Grambling State University of the University of Louisiana System, an M.A. in sociology from Kansas State University, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Sociology from the University of Michigan in 2005.

Registration form

Administrators as Scholars (for Principals, Supervisors and Superintendents) Princeton University

You are invited to represent your district at the Administrators as Scholars seminar on November 16, 2009. Angel L. Harris, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Center for African American Studies of Princeton University will present a seminar entitled, *Oppositional Culture and the Racial Achievement Gap*. The seminar will be held at Prospect House on the university campus from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. in the Library. Lunch will be served from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

To register, please complete this form and fax it to Anne Catena at the Program in Teacher Preparation office at (609) 258-4527 by **September 28, 2009**. We will mail you directions, a parking pass and two readings. We hope you are able to join us.

Name _____

District _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Ext. _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Please indicate if you will be staying for lunch. ___yes ___no

Please describe any dietary restrictions you have:

Administrators as Scholars is dedicated to the intellectual growth of teachers through a partnership between Princeton University's Program in Teacher Preparation and the following school districts:

Bordentown *Flemington-Raritan * Hillsborough * Hopewell Valley * Lawrence * Montgomery * Princeton * Robbinsville * Somerset Hills * West Windsor-Plainsboro

Administrators' Comments:

- ❖ *I would without a doubt, leap at the chance to participate again!*
- ❖ *This is one of the most engaging and useful experiences I have had in my educational career.*
- ❖ *The topics will always be part of conversation in a public school. I may open a discussion at a staff meeting with this information.*
- ❖ *Having attended some of the Teachers As Scholars programs, I was aware of the high quality of the program. Intellectual stimulation is always a part of this program!*
- ❖ *I have attended several Teachers As Scholars as well as Administrators As Scholars, and they have enabled me to think about and discuss issues not always related to what I do, but they are always issues worthy of serious thought.*

Administrators as Scholars is made possible through the support of the Program in Teacher Preparation and area school districts.